

ENERGY & TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

PUBLIC HEARING FEBRUARY 24, 2011

RAISED BILL No. 6405 AAC CERTIFICATION OF SERIOUSLY ILL UTILITY CUSTOMERS..

Testimony of Lynn Rapsilber IN SUPPORT OF RAISED BILL No. 6405

Senator Fonfara, Representative Nardello, and members of the Committee

Thank you for raising this bill at our request.

My name is Lynn Rapsilber MSN ANP-BC an APRN and Chair of the Connecticut Coalition of Advanced Practice Nurses. The Coalition strongly supports this bill as many APRNs are primary care providers for their patients and occasionally need to certify a patient as seriously ill. When such a need arises we look for financial assistance for our patients within the community and often link them to support services. It is only after these avenues are sought that we consider a certification of serious illness

Not having the authority to certify, results in the following:

1. Since we cannot sign for our own patients, we need to "beg" a physician (who never sees the patient) to sign.
 2. Most physicians do not want to sign off on someone else's patient for ethical reasons and, therefore, do so reluctantly. Some physicians actually refuse to sign and the APRN has to search further for a signature. Finding a physician to sign can actually take days – at the very least there is always a delay, waste of time and an added risk to the patient.
 3. Physicians are NOT present in many settings where the APRN is practicing. For example:
 - a. An APRN who is owner of a private practice has no physician in the practice.
 - b. An APRN in a community health setting may see a physician once a week.
 - c. An APRN in a shared practice, the physician may be on vacation.
 - d. Even if a physician is available, he/she may be too busy to sign in a timely manner.
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Having said that, let me be clear that the APRN always eventually gets a signature because of the serious need. It is very important for you to know that the effect of this bill WILL NOT increase the number of certifications, just the process for providers.

But more importantly, it will prevent unnecessary and frustrating delays that occur currently and place patients at risk, sometimes serious risk.

I urge your support of this bill.

Lynn Rapsilber, APRN MSN ANP-BC